

2000 Annual Report CDC/ATSDR Occupational Health and Safety Committee

The CDC/ATSDR Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) has completed another year of significant accomplishments. In 2000, as in previous years, the OHSC continued to be proactive in the development of new safety policies that will impact the health and welfare of the entire CD/ATSDR workforce. I commend the members of the committee for their continued hard work, the staff of the Office of Health and Safety for their strong support, and previous OHSCs for the solid foundation of success they provided for the 2000 OHSC to build upon.

The OHSC began the year with a planning retreat at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center on January 26-27, 2000. The first day was an orientation session provided for new members. Members were encouraged to act as both conduits of information to management and facilitators for policy implementation during their tenure. On the second day, all members participated in reviewing recent accomplishments of the OHSC and identifying goals for 2000, including: 1) developing a communication plan to provide more effective dissemination of safety information from the committee to employees; 2) assisting the Office of Health and Safety (OHS) to successfully implement the Training, Ergonomics, and Corridor policies; and 3) developing guidelines designed to limit visitors in the workplace.

Communication Plan

During the annual retreat, several committee members expressed concern over the effective dissemination of safety information from the OHSC to employees. As a result, Matt Sones of OHS compiled suggestions from the committee on how to formulate a new communications plan. These suggestions included removing the e-mail filters that employees use to screen out safety-related items, developing a search engine for OhASIS to make it more user-friendly and writing an emergency communications plan to handle occupational accidents and injuries.

Workforce Safety Training Policy

Several additions to the Workforce Safety Training Policy were developed to help resolve some conflicts that had arisen during the implementation process. These amendments were approved by a unanimous vote of the OHSC on April 28, 2000. The amendments are listed below.

Under Part III. Policy, paragraph 2:

Site-specific safety training must be completed before new personnel begin working and they must attend the safety orientation program within the first thirty days of employment at CDC.

Under Part IV. Requirements, CDC General Safety Orientation Course, paragraph 3:
All new CDC workers must complete the OHS general safety orientation course (Safety Survival Skills Part I) and, if applicable, the laboratory/epidemiologist safety orientation course (Safety Survival Skills Part II) within 30 days of employment. Once the course(s) is satisfactorily completed, employees will be issued a permanent Identification Badge (ID) by Security. Temporary ID badges will be valid for 30 days only. Supervisors of personnel not completing the training will be required to contact OHS. This requirement ensures that all new CDC workers complete the OSHA-mandated safety training provided by OHS within 30 days. In addition, current CDC workers will not be eligible to renew their permanent ID badge until they have completed their annual safety training requirements.

Under Part IV. Requirements, CDC General Safety Orientation Course, 1. OHS Website or Safety Booklet:
(<http://inside.cdc.gov/intranet/ohs>)

Under Part IV. Requirements, Compliance:
By January 1, 2001, each CIO must include a safety element in all supervisor' work plans. Supervisors with employees working in high hazard areas (labs, shops, etc.) or with hazardous materials (chemical, biological, or radiological) must have a critical safety element. All other supervisors will have a non-critical safety element in their work plan. In addition, all employees working in high hazard areas or with hazardous materials will have a safety element included in their work plan. The suggested work plan elements for supervisors and for non-supervisors are included in Exhibit 2.

*These work plan elements will be a basis for performance ratings of all supervisors by June 2001. **NOTE:** In the management review of this paragraph, the first sentence was deleted.*

Under Exhibit 1, CDD/ATSDR Workforce Safety Checklist, added:
*Discussed CDC policy on workplace violence.
Reviewed the available job-specific safety manuals.
Received directions to the clinic and advised on its use.
Reviewed the use of CDC form 0.304
Reviewed the procedures for filing Workmen's Compensation Forms CA1, CA2 and CA12*

A new exhibit (Exhibit 3) was added to the policy as an example of a *Suggested Work Plan Element for Non-Supervisors*

The amended policy was submitted to a meeting of all Administrative Officers (AO) on

October 12, 2000 and reviewed by upper management prior to being issued.

To facilitate the safety training of all employees, Richard Green worked with a contractor to develop on-line versions of 20 safety training courses, including Safety Survival Skills. The on-line versions will be functional at the beginning of the new year.

Ergonomics Policy

The OHS contractor continued the ergonomic surveys of all workstations in leased space. All of the buildings at the Koger Center were completed under the present task order. These buildings included: Stanford, Williams, Yale, Vanderbilt, Colgate, Rhodes, and Davidson. However, further funding for a new contract was not appropriated until the beginning of the new fiscal year beginning October 1. Still to be completed are the 1700 workstations in Corporate Square - Buildings 10, 11, 12; Executive Park - CDC workstations in Buildings 6 and 57; First Union Building, Decatur; and One West Court, Decatur.

A different contractor was found to do the assessment of all laboratory workstations, and although evaluations will continue at a low level in early 2001, funding will not be in place before 2001.

An ergonomics tracking sheet was developed by Dr. Gregg Kasting and Cheryl Shaw to collect data on the status of corrective actions taken by each CIO during each quarter. Additionally, a master list of all of the CIO ergonomic contacts was compiled. All reports received from the contractor were forwarded to the ergonomic contacts for each CIO along with a tracking sheet. These people were responsible for contacting Jean Gaunce in OHS so that the ergonomic program database could be updated regularly.

During the course of the year, Jean Gaunce added 29 pages of ergonomics information to the OHS website. This material was made available to answer questions and provide information on how to request an ergonomics evaluation of a workstation.

Corridor Policy

The Corridor Policy implementation team was very busy this year overseeing the move of laboratory personnel and equipment into building 17. Since freezers were only allowed in the new linear equipment rooms, excess freezers had to be transported to Lawrenceville as part of the CASPIR program. The team and OHS monitored existing corridor equipment zones in buildings 5 and 7 to prevent them from being refilled by laboratories backfilling the space that was vacated.

Visitors in the Workplace Policy

One of the major accomplishments of the OHSC this year was the writing of the

Guidelines for Visitors in the Workplace. This document was originally intended as guidelines governing the access of family members and visitors to all CDC facilities, including owned and leased buildings. Several members of the OHSC expressed concern that an official policy would more adequately address the needs of CDC, but the Committee voted to forward the document as guidelines only to the Executive Partnership Council (EPC). The EPC voted to strengthen the guidelines to make them official CDC policy. The final policy will be reviewed by the EPC in January.

Some of the provisions of the policy include:

No children under the age of 16 will be allowed in laboratory buildings, animal facilities, construction areas or engineering workspaces.

For those emergency situations where staff needs to bring children to work, children may be in an office for short periods of time (2 hours or less), without prior approval, though the immediate supervisor will be informed. All children under the age of 12 must be under the direct supervision of their parent at all times.

Mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and amphibians shall not be brought upon government-owned/leased property for other than official purposes. Seeing eye dogs, other guide dogs and animals used to guide or assist persons with disabilities are exempt.

It is hoped that the Visitors in the Workplace Policy will be signed by Dr. Koplan in January, 2001.

The 2000 OHSC continued to build upon the solid foundation developed over the years and has many accomplishments to take pride in. Some of the issues that will be addressed during the upcoming year will be a revision of the OHSC charter and discussion of a policy dealing with the safety of pregnant women in the workplace. Under the new leadership of Dr. Kathi Kellar and Amanda Stoddard, the incoming chair and vice-chair for 2001, the OHSC will hold a retreat on January 17-18 to plan for another successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

William E. Morrill
2000 OHSC Chair